STAR WARS™

DOCTOR APHRA

ANNUAL

MARVEL

001

GILLEN
LAMING
SLINEY
BOYD

DOCTOR APHRA ANNUAL

It is a period of opportunity. In a galaxy oppressed by Imperial forces, there is little hope for the future. But for those operating on the fringes, there is potential for profit.

Rogue archaeologist Chelli Aphra has obtained and is *trying to sell the Rur crystal.* However, moving a relic *like this can be tricky* business...luckily she has just *the crew to manage it* – one of which is none other than *Wookiee bounty hunter* Black Krrsantan.

Renowned and feared for his strength and brutality, *Black Krrsantan* follows Aphra to make sure she *doesn't renege* on the massive amount of money she *owes him* – or her promise to help Krrsantan find the *people who made him* this way....

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Kashyyyk.
Years Ago...
OKAY, BOYS...
...LET'S GO GET OURSELVES A RUG.

NO, KOOTAN. WE NEED IT ALIVE. THE XONTI WANT PRIME MEAT TO TRAIN FOR THE PITS.
IF WE FIND ONE BIG ENOUGH TO MAKE A RUG, WE KEEP IT ALIVE.
I'M NOT GOING THROUGH THIS GREEN HELL IF I'M NOT GOING TO AT LEAST BRING HOME A WOOKIEE HAND TOWEL...
I'LL BE GRATEFUL IF WE GET HOME...
TWO ACQUISITION CREWS HAVE BEEN LOST IN THE LAST MONTH ALONE. THE FUR-FACED HOTBLOODS MAY BE SMARTENING UP.
PTTH. "ACQUISITION CREWS"? YOU AND YOUR PRETTY FORKED TONGUE, NOKA.
DON'T DANCE AROUND IT. SAY WHAT YOU MEAN.
SLAVERS.
SOME OF US ARE PROFESSIONALS IN FIELDS OTHER THAN OVERPOWERING THE TREE-APES.
...GOT A TRACE. LOOKS LIKE A BIG ONE.
LET'S BRING HIM HOME.

LIFE SIGNS ARE DEPRESSED.
FLUFFBALL MUST BE SLEEPING.
I'LL TAKE POINT.
HE...HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS. BOUND. LEFT TO BLEED OUT.
NOT GOOD. LET'S GET--

IT'S A TRAP!
RETURN FIRE!
HE WAS BAIT.
A WOOKIEE LEFT ANOTHER FURBALL TO BLEED TO DEATH AS *BAIT?*

YEAH, ENOUGH OF THIS CAPTURE ALIVE BUSINESS.
HE FRIES.
KRRRRRKK!
THUD

KKGRGGGHHHH!
WHA... YES, YES!
I WORK FOR THE XONTI BROTHERS.
HHHWWWHHHGGGHH!
YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT?

Now...
I GOT HIM ABOARD THE SHIP, MADE HIM COMFORTABLE, POURED MYSELF A HUGE DRINK...
ON THE WAY TO THE DROP-OFF, I ASKED HIM...
"WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I WASN'T WORKING FOR THE XONTI?"
HE SAID, "YOU'D BE AS DEAD AS THE OTHER FOUR SLAVER CREWS."
AND I SAID "BUT ONLY TWO GROUPS DISAPPEARED."
THEN HE STARTED LAUGHING, LIKE IT'S THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WHOLE GALAXY.
WE HAVE TO MEET THIS GUY.

Weeks Later...
DIXNET AND DOMTHRO?
I'M DIXNET. HE'S DOMTHRO.
GOOD. I'M SULAN DO.
I'M BLACK KRRSANTAN'S AGENT. HE'S WAITING FOR YOU.

I'LL WARN YOU--HE'S NOT IN A GOOD MOOD.
HE'S ALSO NEVER IN A GOOD MOOD.
BLEEP!
YES, MASTER APHRA IS UP TO SOMETHING AGAIN. NOW SHUSH! WE HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE DEFINITELY NOT MURDERDROIDS, AS AWFUL AS THAT IS.
WE SHOULD HAVE GOT A PROTOCOL DROID.
AHEM. DON'T DOUBT MY TRANSLATION PROWESS. I AM COMPLETELY FLUENT IN SHYRIIWOOK.
HMM. CAN YOU SPEAK SHYRII... WOOKIEE-ESE?
GGGGGGGRRRRR.
HMM. YOU MAKE THAT NOISE, AND I WANT TO PET YOU.
LET'S HAVE YOU PRETENDING TO BE A BABY WOOKIEE AS OUR LAST DEFENSE TACTIC.
WHAT DID THAT MEAN?
"SORRY, GENDER NONSPECIFIC HONORIFIC PRONOUN. WOULD YOU KINDLY LEAVE MY HEAD ATTACHED TO MY BODY?
"I AM FOND OF IT IN ITS CURRENT POSITION."
GOOD TO KNOW. IT'D BE A SHAME FOR A NICE HEAD TO BE WASTED.
SO YOU'RE FINALLY ADMITTING YOU ADMIRE MY NOBLE VISAGE?

I'M SAYING THAT HIGH-STRESS SITUATIONS MAKE ME FLIRTY.
YOU KEEP THAT UP, AND SOMEONE'S GOING TO GO HOME WITH A WOOKIEE.
WELL, WOULDN'T BE THE WORST HAIRY THING I'VE ENDED UP WITH.
OKAY, THE MOSTLY GOOD GENTLEFOLK OF THE PRESS ARE GONE.
BEETEE-- GET THIS BABY OPEN.

GOOD DAY, MR. KRRSANTAN. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
I'M DIXNET DAT.
I'M DOMTHRO RUS.
YOU MAY KNOW OUR WORK. IF NOT, WE ARE...
SERIOUS.
RESPECTED.
RESPECTED?
MOSTLY RESPECTED.
JOURNALISTS.
WE UNDERSTAND YOU WERE TRAINED BY THE XONTI BROTHERS. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND YOU'VE SWORN TO GET REVENGE FOR EVERYTHING THEY DID TO YOU?
WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU TO MAKE YOU HATE THEM SO MUCH?

OKAY, NOKA. THEY'LL DO.
ONE QUESTION...
...WHY ISN'T THE WOOKIEE IN CHAINS?
HE... VOLUNTEERED.
SO... YOU'VE COME HERE TO LEARN? AMBITION!
THAT'S AN ADMIRABLE TRAIT.
WE CAN WORK WITH AMBITION.

LESSON ONE...
...YOU WEAR THE CHAINS.

OUCH.
KGGGRRR!
AH--YES. WHAT WE DO. WELL, WE SYNDICATE OUR STORIES ACROSS THE UNDERVINE...
THE UNDERVINE IS THE NUMBER ONE ALTERNATIVE TO THE MAINSTREAM HOLONET, ENTIRELY UNCENSORED BY THE EMPIRE.
WE CAN ANONYMOUSLY AND SAFELY DISTRIBUTE STORIES TO BE SOLD ON LOCAL MARKETS.
IT'S NOT ON THE SIDE OF THE REBELS OR THE EMPIRE. IT'S ON THE SIDE OF TRUTH.
AND THE TRUTH IS THE MOST POWERFUL THING, AFTER ALL.
EXCEPT FOR SOLAR-SYSTEM-SIZED SUPERLASERS. I'D SAY THEY'RE PROBABLY NUMBER ONE AT THE MOMENT.
THE TRUTH IS STILL HERE. THE DEATH STAR IS GONE. AND THE REAL TRUTH IS THAT NO OPPRESSIVE SYSTEM IS AS POWERFUL AS IT THINKS. AND WE REPORTED ON IT, AND NOW PEOPLE KNOW IT.
YES. AND SOME PEOPLE EVEN BELIEVE IT'S TRUE.
ER...SO, HOW WAS YOUR TRAINING?
SMOOTH INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE.

OKAY. THEY'RE IN SHAPE.
LET'S PUSH THEM AND SEE WHO BREAKS.

AND I THINK WE'VE GOT OUR CONTENDERS...

HMM. BOTH HAVE GOOD CHASSIS FOR ULTRAHEAVY ENHANCEMENT...
LOTS OF BUYERS FOR ULTRAHEAVIES...
HGH.
TRUE, ULTRAHEAVY ENHANCED CLASS IS JUST A BLOODBATH. SO MUCH INVESTMENT FOR A TWO-MATCH CAREER.
WE TRAIN THEM UNTIL THEY'RE A+ KILLERS, AND SOME CHUMP WITH A ROCKET LAUNCHER AND NO UNDERSTANDING OF BLAST RADII TAKES THEM OUT?
HMM.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. WOULD BE GOOD TO KEEP THEM NATURAL.
THEY'RE CHAMPION GOOD... BUT THERE'S A LOT OF CHAMPION FIGHTERS IN THE NATURALS.
TO SELL ONE HIGH, WE NEED AN EDGE.

HMMPH.
DON'T SULK. NO, WE'RE NOT THROWING AWAY ANYTHING.
YEAH, IF WE CYBERNETICALLY ENHANCE HIM, HE GOES INTO THE ULTRAHEAVIES.
BUT SUBDERMAL PLATING? ENDOSKELETON ENHANCEMENT?
PUT ENOUGH METAL IN HIS HANDS TO GIVE HIM PERMANENT KNUCKLE-DUSTERS?
NO MOVING PARTS. NOTHING AGAINST IT IN THE REGULATIONS.
UNTIL THEY REALIZE, HE CLEANS UP.
OF COURSE, CYLO DID SAY THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH THIS. THAT KIND OF INTRUSIVE SURGERY IS GOING TO KILL 50 PERCENT.
LUCKY WE HAVE TWO CANDIDATES...
...LET'S HOPE THE WOOKIEE IS AS STRONG AS HE THINKS HE IS.

One Recovery Later...
NOW, I DO BELIEVE WE CAN SELL *THIS* WOOKIEE.

BLEEP!
YES, I KNOW...
IF YOU BLEW A HOLE IN THE DOOR, I HAVE A FEELING OUR INTREPID JOURNALISTS MIGHT HAVE REALIZED THAT SOMEONE HAD BROKEN IN...
CAN YOU SLICE INTO THE UNDERVINE TRANSMITTER?
BLEEP!
MASTER APHRA. BEETEE IS A CRAFTSBOT.
DON'T OFFEND HIM!
HE COULD NO SOONER FAIL TO SLICE IT THAN I COULD FAIL TO COMPOSE A PROPER MESSAGE...
BLEEP!
KLLK!
WHY, THANK YOU, BEETEE. NOW...
"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN..."
WHO? WHOM? WHOT?
PLEASE, TRIPLE-ZERO. WE NEED TO BE OUT OF HERE BEFORE KRRSANTAN RUNS OUT OF STORIES OR--EVEN WORSE--GETS BORED OF TELLING STORIES...

UGH. NOT ANOTHER WOOKIEE. VERY FIVE YEARS AGO...
NOW, A DOWUTIN. THEY'RE VERY IN NOW. I'D LOVE A DOWUTIN.
THE FURRY GUY GOT A NAME?
HE DOES.

GGGRRRHHH?

GGRRRHH!

GGGRRRHHH?
WHAT? YES, I UNDERSTAND SHYRIIWOOK!
GRRGGHHH.
YES! I WILL!

HAIL BLACK KRRSANTAN! UNDEFEATED! UNBOWED!
KRRRK
HOW MUCH FOR HIM?!
AH, THE FINAL LESSON...

"...SHOWMANSHIP."
SO...LET ME CHECK IF I UNDERSTAND THIS CORRECTLY.
YOU VOLUNTEERED, DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT YOU WERE GETTING INTO AND NOW YOU WANT REVENGE FOR YOUR OWN ARROGANT MISTAKE?
I THINK YOU SHOULD BE POLITER TO THE KILLER WOOKIEE, DIX.
YOU VOLUNTEERED, DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT YOU WERE GETTING INTO AND NOW YOU WANT REVENGE FOR YOUR OWN ARROGANT MISTAKE, SIR?
THAT WAS POLITER!
MY COLLEAGUE DOESN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND DELICACY. LET ME REPHRASE HER--
HSS.

HHHGHHHH GHHHHHH.
GRRRHHH-HHHK. HKK.
WE SHOULD GO.
GO WELL?
GREAT!
FANTASTIC!
JUST LEAVING QUICKLY, FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON.

SO... WHAT DID HE SAY?
REVENGE IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION.
THE BROTHERS CHANGED HIS LIFE.
SO HE OWES THEM A LIFE DEBT.
HOWEVER, HE WAS NEVER ABLE TO PAY THEM BACK...
UNTIL HE CHANGES THEIR LIVES IN A SIMILAR WAY THAT THEY CHANGED HIS, HE WILL ALWAYS OWE THEM.
IT IS NOT REVENGE. IT IS SIMPLY THAT ALL DEBTS MUST BE SETTLED.
AND WHEN HE'S FREE FROM THAT, HE'LL BE ABLE TO COME AND PEEL LOUD-MOUTHED WORDSMITHS.
HE MEANS US.
HE MEANS YOU.
HOW COME IT'S ALWAYS "US" UNTIL WE'RE IN DANGER OF OUR LIVES, WHEN THE "YOU" SUDDENLY STARTS APPEARING, HMM?

OKAY, LET'S JUST GET SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND HIM. HOW DO YOU FANCY MOVING TO ANOTHER GALAXY? WE CAN--
DAMN!
WHAT'S WRONG?
THE UNDERVINE. HUNDREDS OF MESSAGES.
WE SOMEHOW BROADCAST A MESSAGE ADVERTISING...SOME KIND OF AUCTION OF A RARE ALIEN ARTIFACT?
WE'VE LOST OUR POSTING PRIVILEGES UNTIL WE PROVE WE UNDERSTAND THE UNDERVINE ISN'T FOR ADVERTISING.
THANKS FOR DISTRACTING THEM. THE AUCTION OF RUR AT SORCA IS SET UP, ENTIRELY DENIABLY.
ARE YOU OKAY?
GGRRRGHHH.
OKAY. I GET IT. YOU'RE FEELING NOSTALGIC.
AS IF I COULD EVER SAY NO TO YOU.
TRUE. AT LEAST, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE.

AND A SURPRISE SPECIAL TREAT FOR US THIS EVENING! RETURNING TO THE PITS FOR ONE NIGHT, UNDEFEATED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION...
...YOU WON'T FORGET HIS NAME...
BLACK KRRSANTAN!
KRRNNH!
HIS NOSTALGIA IS VERY MESSY.
TEAR!
DEATH!
OH, BRAVO. MORE, MAESTRO! ANOTHER ONE! AND IN HIS SHIN! YES!

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."